



National Child Care Information Center

A service of the Child Care Bureau

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TIERED QUALITY STRATEGIES: QUESTIONS to ASK

Tiered quality strategies broadly encompass the systems of tiered reimbursement (a funding strategy), rated licensing (a licensing strategy), quality rating systems (a consumer strategy), and a combination of these strategies. The overarching goal of the tiered quality strategies is to improve child care quality through systemwide improvements rather than through an incremental approach. There are similarities and differences in these systems as implemented by States. The following is a sample of questions that can be used to provide guidelines for discussion as a State is considering the options and issues in the development (or expansion) of a tiered quality strategy.

1. Are the goals for implementing the tiered reimbursement, rated license, and/or quality rating system clearly identified?
2. Are the differences between a tiered reimbursement, rated license, quality rating system, and the combinations of these systems understood?
3. Are all the potential stakeholders (i.e., providers, licensing staff) at the table for the development and ownership of the system?
4. Are the demographics of your early care and education profession known?
5. Is there a strong licensing program in place?
6. Is the higher reimbursement rate high enough to encourage participation of the child care programs?
7. Can facilities be paid the higher reimbursement rate without impacting the rates of private pay parents?
8. Are the differences in the tiers too great? (Are the steps too big?)
9. If accreditation is used as criteria, which accrediting programs will be honored and how will that determination be made?
10. Is there an infrastructure in place to facilitate and support the tiered quality strategy?
11. Are the compliance standards for maintaining a tier clearly identified? How will compliance be monitored?
12. Are expectations for participation realistic?
13. Have legal implications been considered as they relate to tiered quality strategies?
14. How will the system be evaluated?

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